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ence to the emotions and by means of the imagination,"—basing the distinction, that is, on the difference between means and end. Now Professor Neilson points out justly that "intensity" is attained usually by an imaginative process, but less commonly by other processes. If, as seems likely, he really means by this quality a marked capacity for stirring the emotions, we can then understand its significance. Emotional excitement on the part of the poet, expressing itself in an imaginative flash, is the most common means of stirring up emotion in the reader; but the same result may be attained, on occasion, by other means,—the pulse may be quickened by the logical beauty of a syllogism, or the vivid, though unimaginative, statement of a significant fact. But if it is quickened, if there is anything at all suggestive of "elevating excitement" or "ecstasy," the main process would seem to be emotional. Otherwise, indeed, could the very word "intensity" have any meaning?

Such queries as these may suggest a question whether the more conspicuous aspects of Professor Neilson's book, its attractively symmetrical classification of qualities, tendencies, and the like, have the value which the reader is at first led to hope for. Or they may only suggest a need for restatement and the more guarded use of terms. But in any event, as has already appeared, the real value of the discussion is not dependent upon these matters. The two concluding chapters, on Sentimentalism and Humor in poetry, which do not profess to furnish new formulæ or definitions, are perhaps the most certainly useful of all, dealing, as they do, with qualities everywhere needing tasteful discrimination. On the relation of humor to poetry practically nothing has been written earlier, and there can be little question of the general soundness of Professor Neilson's analysis. Last of all, the book has a good index, fit to guide the student to the right use of the contents.

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ENGLISH TRAGICOMEDY: ITS ORIGIN AND HISTORY, by Frank Humphrey Ristine, Ph. D. New York. The Columbia University Press. (The Macmillan Company.) 1910. Pp. 247. \$1.50.

This work, with its clear introductory description of many elements of tragicomedy, begins well. The magnitude of the ground which it thereupon attempts to cover may be suggested by the following list of its principal topics: the Renaissance debate whether tragicomedy was sanctioned by classical authority; the tragi-comic character of much of the

medieval drama; the neo-Latin tragicomedy of the fifteenth and sixteenth century humanists; the early developments, as to theory and practice, in Italy, Spain, and France ("Pastor Fido," the cloak and sword drama, Garnier and Hardy); the beginnings of English tragicomedy (Edwards, Gascoigne, Whetstone, Lyly, Greene, Shakspeare); some transitional developments (domestic drama, comedy with serious moments, pastoral plays); the hey-day of the type (Beaumont and Fletcher, Shakspeare, Heywood, Middleton, Massinger, Shirley, Killigrew); the scarcity of noteworthy tragicomedies, except those of Dryden, during the Restoration; and their final disappearance in the eighteenth century; together with recurrent discussions of similar types of drama, of contemporary definitions and criticisms, and of works (even non-dramatic) incorrectly called tragicomedies. So huge a field could be profitably surveyed, in a doctorate thesis of some two hundred pages, only if its boundaries were definite, and if its many subdivisions had severally been studied by previous explorers. In this case, neither of these conditions existed. Besides Dr. H. C. Lancaster's *French Tragi-Comedy* and Professor A. H. Thorndike's *Influence of Beaumont and Fletcher on Shakespeare*, there were few special studies directly bearing upon the author's work; and he had often to depend for guidance upon such general histories as those of Ward and of Schelling. The time was not ripe for a thorough synthesis; and the superficiality of this survey is the fault not of Dr. Ristine, who has striven to achieve the impossible, but rather of his advisers, who encouraged a premature undertaking.

Inasmuch as it was determined to traverse so extensive an historical period, it would have been prudent to confine the meaning of the term tragicomedy within as strict limits as possible. But Dr. Ristine's conception of the term is, nominally at least, very broad indeed. Among the characteristics of the type he mentions the mixing of tragic and comic elements; independence of dramatic rules; an unreal, romantic, and exciting action; personages of high rank; the impending of disaster but the absence of death in the case of characters with whom the audience is expected to sympathize; and the happy ending. Yet none of these, not even the last, he insists, is present in each and every tragicomedy. At times he seems to include within the class any drama that is not unquestionably a tragedy or a comedy. In fact, he associates with the type some plays that leave one at the end with the feeling that moral justice has been done (pp. 13, 126, 131,)—which, logically carried out, would compel us to consider some of the greatest tragedies, tragicomedies. So wide a definition of course greatly increases the number of plays he must men-

tion, and correspondingly inhibits thorough criticism of more than a few. It forces him in many an instance to use his space, not in describing what sort of tragicomedy the play is, but in discussing whether it is a tragicomedy at all.

The absence of an essential criterion leads to perplexing sentences like the following: "The borderline between tragicomedy and romantic comedy in Shaksperian drama is at best an arbitrary one" (p. 85). "To establish definite criteria of our own that will at once be comprehensive and satisfactory for the separation of the form from tragedy and comedy is certainly impossible" (p. 114). "To admit within the pale all plays in which characters are brought near death, . . . is obviously impracticable; for in many of the broadest comedies tragi-comic devices abound—wounds inflicted and lives momentarily imperilled" (p. 122). Some pastoral, realistic, and domestic dramas of the seventeenth century are considered "by-paths" of tragicomedy (p. 148); but the sentimental comedy of the eighteenth century is called "very different" (p. 194), and the romantic melodrama, which possesses elements that Dr. Ristine elsewhere finds typical, is summarily excluded (p. 206). He is to be commended for constantly struggling to justify his classifications by contemporary evidence; but the fact that the term has in past ages been ambiguously and inconsistently employed, is not a convincing reason for so using it in a systematic treatise to-day. We are left in the end with the bewildered feeling that we have journeyed through chaos but not reduced it to order.

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ENGLISH ELEMENTS IN JONSON'S EARLY COMEDY.

By Charles Read Baskervill. University of Texas, Studies in English, No. 1, April 8, 1911.

The present study is written in correction of a one-sided view of Jonson's art. Classicism is commonly assumed to be the source of this dramatist's inspiration and dramatic power. This truth has been overstressed, being interpreted by current criticism as meaning that Jonson owes everything to classicism aside from what was original in his own genius. Professor Baskervill, while not denying the Latin influence, has set himself the task of showing a greater indebtedness on Jonson's part to purely English sources than scholarship has previously been aware of. In accordance with this plan he examines with close scrutiny the six earliest comedies, among which he places *A Tale of a Tub* and *The Case is Altered*, comparing them with the work of the poet's contemporaries